

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-01 ISO-00 /004 R

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APPROVED BY: EA:RHMILLER

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R 130058Z NOV 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 268870

FOLLOWING REPEAT PEKING 1865 ACTION SECSTATE INFO

HONG KONG SINGAPORE BANGKOK DTD 03 OCT

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1865

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR USCB

SUBJECT: SIHANOUK MEETING WITH FRG DC BERENDONCK

1. FRG DCM BERENDONCK, WHO SPENT 5 YEARS IN CAMBODIA AS AMBASSADOR, TOLD ME THAT TWO DAYS BEFORE SIHANOUK LEFT FOR PHNOM PENH, 8#-,97(8,;853\$ #8., HIS WIFE AND THEIR DAUGHTER TO HAVE LUNCH WITH HIM AND THE PRINCESS. THE LUNCH WAS HELD IN THE OLD GERMAN LEGATION, WHICH IS NOW ASSIGNED TO SIHANOUK AS HIS PEKING BASE. DURING THE MEAL, SIHANOUK DISCUSSED HIS UPCOMING TRAVELS AND PROBLEMS FACED BY HIS ENTOURAGE IN RETURNING TO CAMBODIA. HE ALSO TALKED ABOUT THE US WITH BITTERNESS AND ANGER.
2. BERENDONCK ALSO HAD HEARD FROM PUNG PENG CHENG, SIHANOUK'S (FORMER) CHEF DE CABINET, IN PARIS, WHO TOLD HIM HE WANTED TO "STAY IN TOUCH" WITH JOHN HOLDRIDGE AND ASKED FOR HOLDRIDGE'S ADDRESS.

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3. A CAMBODIAN JUST BACK FROM PHNOM PENH TOLD BERENDONCK

THAT THE ROYAL PALACE HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF ALL ITS ORNAMENTS AND SYMBOLS. THE ONLY ITEMS FOUND WERE SOME COMMEMORATIVE GOLD MEDALS. THE CAMBODIANS PUT THE BLAME DIRECTLY ON THE US FOR THIS LOOTING. BERENDONCK TOLD HIS INFORMANT THAT GIVEN THE COMMUNIST'S OPPOSITION TO ROYALTY AND ITS SYMBOLISM IT WAS MORE LIKELY THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAD STRIPPED THE PALACE. THE CAMBODIAN SEEMED CONFUSED AT THIS POINT.

4. COMMENT: BERENDONCK OBVIOUSLY HAS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SIHANOUK. SIHANOUK TOLD HIM HE WANTED TO STAY IN TOUCH. WE WILL FOLLOW UP AS APPROPRIATE WITH BERENDONCK.
BUSH UNQTE KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE268870
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EA/VLC:BSKIRKPATRICK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750395-0342
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751149/aaaabrxy.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <13 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIHANOUK MEETING WITH FRG DC BERENDONCK
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, US, CB, GE, (BERENDONCK), (SIHANOUK, NORODOM)
To: PARIS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006